

Daily

New Orleans



Bulletin

82nd North American Bridge Championships

Editors: Brent Manley and Paul Linxwiler

Aileen Osofsky 1926-2010

Aileen Osofsky, Goodwill Committee chair and one of ACBL's most influential voices for promotion of friendly behavior at the bridge table, died at New York University Hospital on June 22 of complications from leukemia. She was 84.



Osofsky was asked to chair the ACBL Goodwill Committee in 1985, even though she was not a member of the committee.

She had made a name for herself with the Greater New York Bridge Association and is one of only three life members of that organization.

Last year, in recognition of her dedication and long service, the ACBL Bridge Hall of Fame Committee selected her for the Blackwood Award, thus making her a member of the Hall of Fame. At the induction ceremony, her son Alan noted, "Although she isn't the best player, she has done as much for the game as anyone."

A native of Brooklyn NY, the former Aileen Bryant was the daughter of a contractor who built barracks for women during World War II.

After graduating from high school, Osofsky lied about her age and went to work for a five-and-dime store in Harrisburg PA, later becoming a long-distance telephone operator.

She and her husband, Meyer, attended the same high school in Brooklyn. They were married after he was discharged from the military — he was a tail gunner on a B-24 bomber — and he started a women's clothing business, Aileen Inc.

The business required a lot of travel, and the company had private aircraft that Meyer flew, sometimes with the family. Aileen learned to fly as a safety play — she wanted to know what to do in case her husband became incapacitated during a flight. She picked up the flying part relatively quickly. "Learning to land," she recalled, "took some time."

In her 25 years of service as Goodwill chair, Osofsky never stopped trying to convince ACBL members that friendly demeanor at the bridge table is good for everyone.

In a letter to the ACBL dated June 18, 2010, Osofsky reflected on her long association with the committee:

"When I got a call twenty-five years ago asking me to become the chair of the National Goodwill Committee, I had no idea how profound and positive an impact the organization and its members would have on my life.

"As I transition now to a less-involved role in the activities of the ACBL, I must acknowledge the paramount part that the organization has played in filling my life with joy, passion, and meaning — and I must thank you all from the bottom of my heart for giving me the opportunity to participate in the group's work, and for doing that work with me."

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Four honored at Hall of Fame dinner

If you need proof that when bridge players get together, it's story-telling time, just drop into an induction ceremony for the ACBL Bridge Hall of Fame some time.

Thursday's party was no exception, with multiple anecdotes about David Berkowitz — the

newest member of the Hall of Fame — Sportsman of the Year Roy Welland, Sidney Lazard Jr., after whom the sportsmanship trophy is named; Blackwood Award winner Tom Stoddard and von Zedtwitz Award winner Paul Hodge.

Mike Passell, demonstrating his skill as master of ceremonies, kicked off the program with an account of a tournament in Arkansas with Berkowitz as a teammate. Berkowitz played four straight game contracts against two women, each contract failing on bad trump splits. On the fifth deal, trumps split badly again, but Berkowitz made his game on an endplay.

"I'm really glad you made that contract," one of the women said to Berkowitz. "I was afraid if you went down again, you'd get fired."

Larry Cohen, Berkowitz's longtime partner now semi-retired, teased Berkowitz about several foibles, but he said, "We all know what a great player David is, and of all the people I know, his



Larry Cohen and new ACBL Bridge Hall of Fame inductee David Berkowitz

slam bidding is the best. It was a great 20 years playing together."

When Berkowitz took the podium, he told about how his partnership with Cohen ran so smoothly — or mostly so. In the first couple of years, there was some complaining by Berkowitz when things didn't go

so well. This displeased Cohen, but they reached an agreement that Berkowitz could "yell," defined as any indication of unhappiness, once every six months.

One day after many years of play, Berkowitz asked Cohen how he thought the partnership had gone. Cohen acknowledged that Berkowitz had been a model partner. "So," Berkowitz said, "that means I have forty yells, right?"

"No," said Cohen, "if you don't use them, you lose them."

Berkowitz's record speaks for itself — 25 North American championships, more than 30,000 masterpoints and prestigious wins in foreign tournaments. He is now a full-time player living in Florida.

With Berkowitz to enjoy the honor were his wife, Lisa, also a champion player, daughter Dana and son Michael.

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GNT flights in quarterfinal stage

Four flights of the Grand National Teams will play their second day of knockouts today with eight teams in each flight.

Top seed in the Championship Flight, based on final standings from the Wednesday Swiss teams qualifying, is the squad led by Steve Robinson of District 6. Last year's champion, led by Rose Meltzer, did not qualify for the knockout phase.

Also, the powerhouse District 9 team led by Warren Spector and including Jeff Meckstroth and Eric Rodwell, were eliminated in the first round of knockouts on Thursday.

Other No. 1 seeds playing today:

Flight A, David Brower (District 20); Flight B, Paul Chan (District 15) and, Flight C, Chris Poulos (District 20).

Goodwill Message

Welcome to New Orleans and the Summer 2010 North American Bridge Championships. Tournament Chair John Federico and his group of volunteers, staff and sponsors wish everyone good luck. They have worked hard to make your stay in New Orleans enjoyable.

Aileen Osofsky 1926-2010
National Goodwill Committee Chairman



Notice to players who live outside North America

Participation in the von Zedtwitz, Bruce or Young Life Master Pairs is limited to ACBL members who have achieved the rank of Life Master.

Players who reside outside North America and who do not meet this criteria, but feel they are otherwise eligible to participate, must receive a waiver in writing prior to the commencement of the contest.

Players who need information or who wish to request a waiver should inquire at the selling location. Please note that players who have been waived into previous Life Master Pairs do not have to re-apply.